

Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

BI-MONTHLY

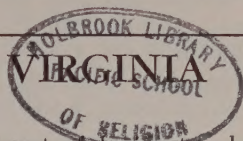
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CLOSED SCHOOLS THREATENED IN



Arlington County's deep split over the race issue continued to draw major attention to that locality in the school segregation dispute in Virginia. A Federal district court has ordered seven Negroes admitted to four Arlington schools. About 15 have applied for admission.

The Tenth District Fundamental Educational Corporation drafted plans for operating private schools for white children in Arlington in the event public schools are closed under state law because of integration.

Jack Rathbone, acting secretary of the corporation and executive secretary of the pro-segregation Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties in Arlington, announced that two model private schools will be opened early in July to demonstrate what can be done along this line.

One school will be in a six-room house and the other in a store. Both structures are vacant and have been obtained temporarily rent-free.

Rathbone said tentative arrangements had been made to equip the model schools with card tables and folding chairs, television sets for closed circuit teaching by TV, projectors, screens and other equipment. Also on hand will be professional teachers and some children, according to Rathbone.

"We expect to prove that we can furnish education, even better education than is given in the public schools, even though the surroundings won't be as plush," . . .

On the other side, the Arlington Organizing Committee to Preserve Public Schools was formed at a meeting attended by between 600 and 700 county residents. O. Glenn Stahl, former school board president, was elected president of the committee.

The Arlington Civic Federation, representing 37 citizens' groups in the county, went on record as supporting the move to keep schools open.

The Arlington League of Women Voters adopted a "statement of position" urging county officials to take all possible legal steps to keep the schools open. The official board of Fairlington Methodist Church adopted a resolution along the same line.

Twenty-six of the 39 white PTA groups in the county were on record supporting the efforts of the Organizing Committee to Preserve Public Schools.

Stahl, who heads the organizing committee, has said that he believes there are good prospects for getting an injunction, if necessary, to keep the schools from closing or to force them open if they do close.

Twenty-eight clergymen representing ten Protestant denominations in Arlington adopted a statement opposing use of church buildings for private schools "as a means of evading or circumventing the Supreme Court's decision." . . .

Parents of children attending Venable elementary school in Charlottesville, to which 13 Negroes have applied for admission next fall, were asked by the PTA to choose between:

- 1) "A measure of integration"
- 2) "A closed Venable School"

The results, as announced, showed 177 marking the first choice and 128 the second. The PTA did not receive replies from 134 parents, and 16 others returned the questionnaires without indicating a preference.

Thus, of those who answered, 58 per cent chose some integration in preference to closing the school. However, this was only 39 percent of the total number of parents queried. . .

Legal developments added *Norfolk* and *Newport News* to the list of Virginia localities facing desegregated public schools in September. . .

(*Southern School News*, July 1958)

Charlottesville

Faced with the prospect of ~~having~~ to admit 31 colored children to previously all-white schools in the fall, the Charlottesville school board has been working out an assignment policy which it hopes will exclude the applicants from the schools for reasons other than race or color.

The board is under Federal court order to end segregation in public schools with the beginning of the fall term. At the same time, it is faced with a state law that will automatically close any school that is integrated. The applications of 31 colored pupils have been pending several weeks, while the board has been frantically seeking a way out.

This plan on which the board is working is based on the hope that the assignment policy holds up under court tests. Should it fail, then public schools could be closed and perhaps private and segregated neighborhood schools, sponsored by small groups of white parents, might come into being.

There are three major divisions in the practical application of the assignment policy. First, all applications of the colored pupils will be screened on individual basis as to proper scholastic standards, residence requirements and similar points. This first line of resistance is expected to weed out many of the applicants.

For those who pass the initial phase, there will be a re-screening to see if their acceptance would be in the interests of the individual children as well as that of the entire community. Finally, should these tactics fail, the board will, as its last defense, use factors, other than race or color, on which the children might be eliminated. An important point here is that the board must be prepared to defend itself to the point where the Federal courts will be left "holding the bag" on deciding if the children should be admitted or not.

If the court so decided in favor of the child or children, the decision must also embrace that of the specific school to which the individual child desires admission.

Of the 31 children applying, 26 are asking for transfers. Eleven want to attend Lane High School, the city's only public white secondary school. Nine others want to attend Venable Elementary School and six want to attend McGuffey. The remaining five want to enter the first grade, four at Venable and one at Johnson.

(*Afro-American*, July 12)

Richmond

Richmond has become the fifth locality in Virginia to be faced with the threat of integrated—and closed—schools this fall.

School officials made public . . . the applications of three Negro children who want to transfer in September from their school to Nathaniel Bacon Elementary School, an all white facility.

If the applications are approved—under state law the integrated school would be closed.

If local governing and school authorities desired to, they could petition the governor to return the school to local control. They then could operate the school on an integrated basis without state funds.

Gov. Almond has not said whether he would return closed and integrated schools to public control. When asked that question by an Arlington delegation . . . he said he would have to make that decision when and if it came "in the light of the existing situation."

School officials said the three pupils were represented by Attorney Oliver W. Hill and asked to be transferred from Chimborazo School to Nathaniel Bacon School "or, in the

alternative to such other school to which their assignment may properly be determined on the basis of objective consideration without regard to their race or color."

Hill submitted the transfer requests to the school board in a letter dated July 3 and requested an answer on or before July 21.

City school officials declined comment on the applications—the first such applications in Richmond since the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision outlawing public school segregation. It was understood, however, that the school board would consider the matter at its next meeting.

It was also expected that some school officials and possibly some members of city council would confer today with legal officials.

The request from the three children will be forwarded to the State Pupil Placement Board. Their parents will not be required to fill in and sign placement applications, but they may do so voluntarily.

(*Richmond Ledger-Dispatch and Star*, July 10)

GRADE-A-YEAR PLAN

The Nashville Board of Education approved a grade-a-year desegregation plan . . . which will abolish compulsory racial segregation in the city's public schools by the fall of 1968.

The board adopted the plan by a 7 to 1 vote. The proposal desegregates the second grade next September.

The sole dissenting vote was cast by Coyness Ennix, an attorney, the sole Negro member of the board. He felt the plan was too slow.

First grade in the public school system was desegregated by Federal court order last fall. . . .

Text of the resolution on the supplementary plan:

"Be it resolved that the plan heretofore submitted to the court and approved by the court as modified be supplemented as follows:

"A. Compulsory segregation based upon race is abolished in grade two of the schools of the City of Nashville for the scholastic year beginning in September, 1958, and thereafter for one additional grade beginning with each subsequent school year; i.e., from grade three in September 1960, etc. . . .

"B. All provisions of the plan with respect to zoning transfers and the like shall continue in force and effect with respect to each additional grade as the plan becomes applicable to such grade.

"C. The board of education declares its policy to be to keep the United States District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee informed of the progress being made at such intervals as the court may desire or direct and of such problems as may arise or be solved which in the opinion of the board of education should be called to the attention of the court."

(*Nashville Tennessean*, April 1)

N. C. STUDENTS SEEK TRANSFER

Eight Negro students requested reassignment to white or predominantly white schools in Winston-Salem for the school term starting next fall.

The announcement was made by Winston-Salem schools Supt. A. Craig Phillips.

Phillips said five of the Negro pupils asked for transfer, from Negro Atkins High to predominantly white Reynolds High School here for the coming year.

Three others, he said, requested transfer from Negro Diggs Elementary School to white Easton School.

Phillips declined to release the names of the Negro students. He said school authorities will examine the reapplication requests and decide whether to grant them later.

One Negro student was admitted to white Reynolds High School here last year to mark the first time that racial barriers had been lowered in Winston-Salem schools.

At the same time, six Negroes were admitted to white schools in Greensboro and four to white schools in Charlotte.

Charlotte and Mecklenburg County school officials already have received at least 28 applications from Negroes wishing

transfer to white or predominantly white schools in the city and county. However, no such applications had been received to date by the Greensboro school system.

(*Raleigh News & Observer*, June 14)

Individual typed and signed applications from 24 Negro students residing in the Craven Corner section of Craven County have been submitted to the County Board of Education (in New Bern, N. C.) requesting reassignment to the white Havelock High School.

Most of the applying pupils have been attending Queen Street Negro High School in Beaufort. Exceptions are elementary students entering high school, after attending a private school at Craven Corner during the past year.

Negro children in the Craven Corner and Harlowe area, near the Carteret County line, have long attended the Queen Street School, while white children living in the same area have attended the white Beaufort high school.

Havelock white high school, opened two years ago, had a student body of 231 last year, and was badly overcrowded with children living in the immediate Havelock area. A similar jam is expected in September.

Robert L. Pugh, superintendent of Craven County Schools, said Thursday that he had no comment to make on the 24 applications, pending the next meeting of the County Board of Education on the first Monday in July.

A number of Junes County pupils attend school in Craven County at Dover, while some of Beaufort County's students attend school in Craven County at Vanceboro.

It is considered probable . . . that the mass reassignment request is an outgrowth of discontent voiced by Negro families in Craven Corner Community when consolidation affected their Craven Corner Elementary School last year.

The Craven Corner school had eight grades until the consolidation. The first four grades were retained. Craven Corner pupils in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades were re-assigned to the newly built Negro Godette School, constructed at a cost of \$150,000.

Unhappy about this transfer to the nearby Godette School, parents of approximately 20 Negro children started their own private school at a Craven Corner church.

There are 4,767 white children in Craven County schools and 2,514 Negro children. This is the first time that a Negro pupil in the county has sought admission in a white school. (*Raleigh News and Observer*, June 20)

CHATTANOOGA SAYS "NO"

There will be no integration of (Chattanooga) public schools when the fall term begins late in August, said the city school board Wednesday.

In an unanimous decision, the board said, "it would be extremely unwise to comply with the request."

Integration of schools had been requested by the Citizens for General Improvement, an organization headed by Negroes Douglas Carter, president, said he would have no comment on the decision until the organization meets Friday.

The board had, in March, 1956, estimated that schools would not be integrated for "probably five years or more."

The board's statement said in part that "we are in a period of transition and no one knows the time element. We must move in good faith to continue and improve public education and to minimize tension. We are certain education cannot take place in an atmosphere of tension and bitter conflict." (*Kansas City Call*, July 18)

DESEGREGATE NEW ORLEANS BUSES

Negroes sat side by side with white people on public buses and street cars . . . for the first time in this city's long and turbulent history.

There was no reported violence.

The city of Mardi Gras seemed to accept mixing of the races in public transportation with calmness—but you could feel the awareness of persons of both races.

Some people resented the court-ordered change in their lives. Unknown persons showed their resentment by burning an eight-foot wooden cross soaked with kerosene during

Friday night on the lawn of U.S. District Judge J. Skelly Wright, who signed the order ending bus segregation.

An unidentified woman sat behind a newsman Saturday with her aged mother watching a young Negro woman take a bus seat in the area formerly reserved for whites.

"All this Negro trouble," she told her mother, "was caused by those three judges. That Wright. They ought to tar and feather him."

The young Negro woman quietly took a seat with a middle-aged white man reading a folded newspaper. The white man got up and stood at the front of the bus. The Negro woman moved over to the window side of the double seat.

Two stops later, an attractive and well-groomed young white woman boarded the bus and took the seat next to the Negro woman. . .

(*Dallas Morning News*, June 1)

REPORT FROM LOUISVILLE

A progress report on integration in the public schools of Louisville, Ky., was given . . . by Dr. Omer Carmichael, the superintendent of schools there.

Participating in the "All-College Lectures on Education" at Teachers College, Columbia University, he said that the process of desegregation was "going better than expected."

Only eight of the city's seventy-five schools are still all-Negro after two years, he said.

As for disciplinary problems, Dr. Carmichael said there had been relatively few in the first year. The second year brought more, he noted, but he said that this was because the newness had worn off and the effort was not so intensive as during the first year.

"In my judgment," Dr. Carmichael asserted, "the second year of the program is more nearly a normal year than was the first."

The situation in the seventy-five schools in 1957 was: fifty-five schools had mixed population representing 73.6 per cent of all the students; eleven all-white schools had 12.5 per cent; and nine all-Negro schools had 13.9 per cent.

This year the situation is fifty-seven mixed with 78.2 per cent of the students, ten all-white with 10.7 per cent and eight all-Negro with 11.1 per cent.

(*New York Times*, July 23)

In Florida

University of Florida graduate schools were opened to qualified Negroes . . . by a Federal district court order that broke the solid front of segregation in this southern state.

Judge Dozier Devane enjoined the board of control from enforcing any policy, custom or usage in the graduate schools that restricted admissions to white persons only.

The order climaxed a nine-year legal fight by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to break down racial barriers at the all-white institution.

The order applied only to the University of Florida at Gainesville. Asst. Atty. Gen. Ralph E. Odum said a separate suit will have to be brought to open the doors of Florida State University, the state's other white university, to Negroes unless the board of control decides to do so.

(*Nashville Tennessean*, June 20)

HOUSING IN NEW YORK

A number of real estate operators (in New York City) are violating the new Fair Housing Practices Law, the city finds, but a "significant" number are complying or are taking steps to do so.

Three conclusions were announced (recently) by Dr. Alfred J. Marrow, chairman of the Commission on Intergroup Relations. . . .

Dr. Marrow issued a report on seventy complaints of discrimination received during the first three months the law was in effect. . . .

As of June 30, most of the complaints were still being investigated. Only eight cases had been settled. Three resulted in rental of the units in question. Two complaints were disallowed, and three were withdrawn. Four other cases may result in rentals.

After investigation determines the validity of a complaint,

the commission attempts to negotiate a settlement between the landlord and the would-be renter.

The seventy complaints came mostly from middle-income families of professional and white-collar workers. Dr. Marrow said they were better educated and more able to afford higher rentals than the average New Yorker. One is listed in *Who's Who* in America.

Many "eminently qualified" families were shown to be at a disadvantage in finding decent homes because of their race, religion, nationality or ancestry.

Of the complaints received, fifty-eight charged discrimination because of national origin, and six because of ancestry.

Forty-two involved properties in Manhattan, eleven in the Bronx, ten in Brooklyn, and seven in Queens. There were no complaints on areas in Staten Island.

Dr. Marrow said there appeared to be a trend away from open discrimination. He said that there was no expressed opposition to the law, and that most of those charged with discrimination denied it.

But, he went on, thirty-seven complainants asserted they had received false information. Most often they were told that a unit had been rented when there was reason to believe this was untrue.

He said sixteen complaints alleged outright discriminatory statements. Three others said a discriminatory attitude was implied.

The complaints also charged delaying tactics, refusal to accept or process applications, return of deposit, withholding of services, cancellation of leases, excessive charges and denial of privileges granted to other tenants.

However, Dr. Marrow went on, the management of several large developments had instructed their agents to cooperate.

"Speakers from the commission have been invited by several real estate groups, which have shown every indication they expect to conform with the law," he said.

(*New York Times*, July 21)

CIVIL RIGHTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania has set up in its department of justice a division charged with the protection of civil rights and enforcement of laws in their defense. This action grew out of last year's notorious incident at Levittown, where state police had to be called in to protect a Negro family that had moved into the community.

Victor Wright, Philadelphia attorney who has been named chief of the new division, says it is hoped that local law-enforcement officials will form the vanguard against violations of civil rights. . . .

Says Mr. Wright: "It is believed that through the trained preparedness of its own personnel and of at least a cadre of the state police officers, and through informed and willing local officials in all sections of the state, the civil rights division can take, direct or assist in immediate police action to prevent or suppress actions aimed at the denial of civil rights. In any event, the attorney general . . . will participate wherever the law and the facts warrant—boldly, so as to discharge his constitutional, statutory and moral responsibilities, but with caution, so as not to engage in litigation for the sake of litigation. It is hoped that the civil rights division will most often be successful in settling through mediation the matters which come to it. Prevention is . . . the most satisfactory solution to any problem of law enforcement . . . Where mediation fails, it is believed that awareness of the existence of the civil rights division and of its intention and ability to enforce the apposite law will deter from lawless conduct at least some would-be participants."

(*The Christian Century*, April 30).

SEEK VOTING RIGHTS

On behalf of Rev. G. D. Darby of Prentiss, Miss., the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has filed suit against the circuit clerk of Jefferson Davis county, charging that Negroes are being prevented from registering in the county, where for many years a large number of them voted. Also, the association has filed a suit under the administration's recent Civil Rights act, requesting the court to determine the constitutionality of the state law requiring

a prospective voter to interpret the Federal Constitution before he can register. Gov. J. P. Coleman urged that a new state constitution be drawn so that such suits could be barred, but the legislature did not follow up his suggestion. Some Negro organizations have set up special classes for registration.

The Mississippi legislature adjourned after enacting into law only a few of the measures proposed as means of preserving racial segregation. The final such measure adopted was one calling for investigation of the N.A.A.C.P. Non-governmental agencies, however, have been more persistent in pursuing opposition to any integration sentiment. The state American Legion organization has ousted the Jackson Negro post for supporting the N.A.A.C.P. The Jackson citizens council has launched a house-to-house campaign to organize resistance to integration. . . .

(*The Christian Century*, June 18).

POSTSCRIPT TO AN ACT OF VIOLENCE

How does the community of a small Southern city react to a show of violence directed against its Jews?

Gastonia is a city of about 35,000 located in the prosperous Piedmont section of North Carolina. Its main industry is textile manufacturing. New industry is moving into the area, bringing with it people from different parts of the country. Its racial relations have been tranquil. No attempt has been made to desegregate Gastonia's schools and the community, to forestall such efforts, is modernizing public facilities for Negroes along "separate but equal" lines. Charlotte, just 18 miles away, and Greensboro and Winston-Salem admitted their first Negroes into previously all-white school last fall. But the past two years have seen the growth of Ku Klux Klan activity in the area; until the Lumbee Indians took a hand in the situation at Maxton, Charlotte was the "imperial headquarters" of "Reverend" James Cole's Klan organization.

The Jews of Gastonia, while generally sympathetic to attempts to gain equal rights for Negroes, have not been active in desegregation activities. The 49 Jewish families—10 in the textile industry, 30 in retail trades, the rest professional or salaried—have lived quietly, enjoying middle class or better status in the community. Gastonia's Jews are members of all civic organizations they care to join. Marshall A. Rauch, a transplanted New Yorker who has taught Sunday school at Temple Emanuel for the past five years was named Gastonia's 1957 Man of the Year by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. A Jewish merchant, Leon Schneider, was mayor in 1956-57.

Then, while Gastonia slept early one Sunday morning, someone placed a bagful of dynamite beside the door of Temple Emanuel and lit a ten-foot fuse. The fuse burned to within an inch and a half detonation before going out.

Overnight, Gastonia Jewry's sense of security was shaken. There were grim jokes, of course. One Temple member, consistently absent from services, said that if the bomb had gone

off on a Friday night, he would have been the only Jew left alive in Gastonia. But basically, there was anger and bewilderment. Many Jews preferred to think that the bombing attempt must have been perpetrated by an individual lunatic rather than, say, by a member of an organized Klan. But foremost was the almost unmentionable question: "Am I really accepted by the people about me?"

The Jews of Gastonia did not have to wait long. The fact that the bomb did not go off, said Police Chief G. F. Peninger, "was due to the hand of the Lord at work." Two days after the attempted bombing, the City of Gastonia announced a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those guilty. "The people of Gastonia are profoundly shocked at the attempt to dynamite one of our religious institutions," Mayor R. A. Ferguson and the city board said in the accompanying statement. "The cordial relations among our various groups in Gastonia are a matter of great pride to us; we intend to use all justifiable means to keep them this way." The statement went on to instruct police to "leave no stone unturned . . ."

The Gastonia Gazette published a front page picture of the homemade bomb with a caption, "Have you seen this bag?" It urged anyone familiar with it to get in touch with the police and said, "They need your help to solve the case."

The spiritual leadership of the community quickly spoke up. A day after the Gazette story, the Executive Committee of the Greater Gastonia Ministerial Association released a statement denouncing the act as "un-American" and "un-Christian." "We plead with our people in the different churches and congregations of Greater Gastonia," the statement said, "to manifest a spirit of tolerance and goodwill toward each other in the spirit of Him who is our example."

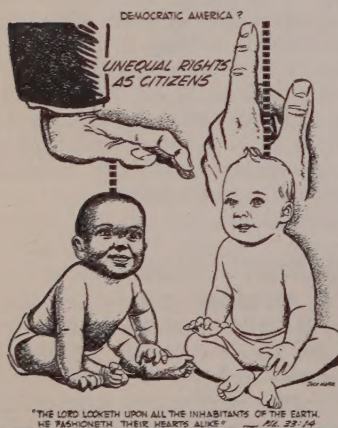
Most touching were the little, personal acts of kindness and understanding shown by Christian friends and neighbors. People stopped Jewish residents on the street or phoned or wrote them apologizing for the act, all with the theme: "I don't know how this could happen in our city." Two men immediately began collecting money for a reward for the capture of those responsible; their efforts stopped only because the city announced its own reward.

The spontaneous outburst of loyalty and affection moved the Jews of Gastonia deeply, brought Jews and Christians in Gastonia closer than they had ever been before. But the memory of an act of violence is still there.

(*The ADL Bulletin*, June, 1958)

The matter in these pages is presented for the reader's information. Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of "Racial and Cultural Relations" of The National Council of Churches.

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